

Services to Consumers From The Physical Therapy Board of California



Physical Therapy Board of California

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What is the Physical Therapy Board of California?

The Physical Therapy Board of California (Board) is the state agency responsible for licensing and disciplining physical therapist and physical therapist assistants. The Board consists of four members of the profession (physical therapist) and two public members. The four professional members and one of the public members are appointed by the Governor; the Senate Rules Committee and the Speaker of the Assembly each appoint a public member. The Board meets three times a year, in various cities around the state.

What services does the Physical Therapy Board provide to Consumers?

The Board is a California State government agency, which licenses and disciplines physical therapist and physical therapist assistants. The Board provides three principal types of consumer services: verifies education and background prior to licensure, information about physical therapist and physical therapist assistants, and investigation of complaints against physical therapist and physical therapist assistants.

The Board is not a referral service. That is, we cannot direct you to a physical therapist in your community.

Members of the Board are appointed to one of two “committees.” The Licensing Committee assures all physical therapist and physical therapist assistants have adequate education and training. The “Practice Issues Committee” responds to complex practice issues inquiries.

Staff of the Physical Therapy Board

The Board’s staff is assigned to either the Licensing Services Program, Consumer Protection Services Program or the Program Support Services. The primary role of the staff is to support the work of the members of the Board.

Licensing Services Program

- ✓ Assures all physical therapist and physical therapist assistants have adequate education and training
- ✓ Administers national and state licensure examinations
- ✓ Reviews non-routine applications for physical therapist and physical therapist assistants
- ✓ Verifies licenses to employers and public via phone and in writing

Consumer Protection Services Program

- ✓ Received and evaluates complaints against physical therapist and physical therapist assistants and non licensed physical therapy aides
- ✓ Through the Department of Consumer Affairs, Division of Investigation, the Board investigates complaints where there is reason to believe the law may have been violated.
- ✓ With legal assistance from the Office of the Attorney General, staff files charges against violators and prosecutes the charges.
- ✓ At the Board’s request, the Office of the Attorney General represents the Board at public hearings for physical therapist and physical therapist assistants accused of violating the law.
The Board members may themselves:
- ✓ Adopt, modify, or reject the proposed decisions of Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) following hearings
- ✓ Adopt alternative decisions when ALJ decisions are rejected
- ✓ Adopt disciplinary actions that are negotiated through stipulated agreements between the Board and accused licensees
- ✓ Oversees Diversion Program which seeks to rehabilitate physical therapist and physical therapist assistants impaired by alcohol or other substance abuse

When you have a problem with a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant ...

Most patients have no major problems with their therapist. If there are any problems, usually they are minor inconveniences such as scheduling appointments, personality conflicts, or disputes over bills or insurance.

However, if you believe it is affecting the quality of care you receive, you should contact the Board.

Major categories of violations of law:

A physical therapist (PT) or physical therapist assistant (PTA) can be disciplined for a number of reasons. The most serious categories are:

- ✓ Gross Negligence . . .
Gross negligence is an extreme departure from accepted standards of practice. This is, the physical therapist/physical therapist assistant has done something that most other PT/PTA's would not think was correct.
- ✓ Repeated negligent acts . . .
Negligent acts that are not an extreme departure from accepted standards of practice, but are still negligent, are considered simple negligence
- ✓ Incompetence. . .
If a PT or PTA is found to be performing procedures that are beyond his or her training or expertise, or continuing to use a procedure that is unnecessary or obsolete, this may be evidence of incompetence
- ✓ Aiding and Abetting the practice of physical therapy. . .
The PT's inappropriate supervision of PTA's and physical therapy aides. The PT aide is an unlicensed person who assists a PT in his or her practice and must be supervised at all times by the PT; the PTA assists the PT in his or her practice but cannot practice autonomously.

To speak with a Physical Therapy
Board Consumer Protection Services
Analyst, who can assist you with your
complaint, concern or refer you to the proper
agency, call the Board's tollfree complaint
line at:

1-800-832-2251

The Board also has an Internet website at:

www.ptb.ca.gov

From our homepage, you can link
directly to numerous other agencies and
organizations, print out complaint forms, and
obtain current information about the Board.